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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers prepares Iraq for upcoming elections

By Mike Scheck
Gulf Region District

Standing up a strong capable police force is a key factor in the U.S. strategy to bring stability to Iraq. In preparation for the upcoming Iraqi 2010 national elections, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region District, is serving as the managing partner for the construction of 15 Expedient Police Stations in northern Iraq. And the engineering emphasis is on expedient construction of the police stations.

The police station design is similar to the living conditions of compounds on U.S. installations in Iraq. The area is cordoned off with concrete T-walls, a staple of the force protection measures in Iraq. The office and living quarters within the stations are containerized housing units or CHUs set on concrete blocks. An entry control point is the only access into the station and is backed-up by a metal sliding door.

The stations also have a central parking lot for police vehicles and each station will have a generator unit to provide uninterrupted electrical power. The stations cost about \$1 million with all of the current modifications and are scheduled to be completed by January of 2010. Funding for the police stations is provided by the Iraq Security Forces Fund.

USACE is also improving the quality of life for Iraqi police officers in a number of



USACE Gulf Region District Commander, Col. Dan Anninos (center) inspects the progress of an expedient police station in Mosul with Lt. Cmdr. Frank Carroll (Left), project engineer of the police station construction and Larry Petrosino, the GRD deputy of program management. (GRD photo by Scott Harris).

Baghdad-area police stations with current renovation projects ranging from minor cosmetic upgrades to complete major construction overhauls with oversight from Gulf Region District's Baghdad Area Office.

The contract expenditures range from \$278,000 for renovations to \$1.4 million for the construction of several new fully functioning police stations in and around Baghdad.



Containerized Housing Units (CHUs) will serve as living quarters, shower facilities and office space for the expedient police stations under construction in northern Iraq. (GRD photo by Mike Scheck).

Renovations to the police stations include upgrades to electrical distribution systems, repair and replacement of sewer and potable water systems, upgrades to communication systems and the addition of fueling and pump island stations. Some stations will also receive new perimeter walls, an entry control point, guard towers and a new parking lot.

Maj. Chad Wendolek, the USACE International Zone (IZ) Resident Office, Officer in Charge, says the sites designated for renovation and new construction met a two-step criteria. "The strategic positioning of each police station should help balance out protection throughout the area and display to the local population that the Iraqi police are in control," Wendolek said.

Wendolek calls the National Police Rest Site currently under construction, the "cornerstone" of the law enforcement project. "This \$13 million project will act as the command and control node for all police stations and will house the majority of the prime decision makers for the Iraqi police," Wendolek said. "Due to its location, it will serve as a symbol of the commitment to the rule of law by the Iraqi people."

Even the Baghdad Police Divisional Headquarters is on the renovation list. Upgrades to the headquarters facility include the construction of a guard ready room, the addition of a second floor to the engineering wing and minor repairs to the interior and exterior walls and doors.

The projects are scheduled to be completed by late Summer of 2010.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq has completed thousands of reconstruction projects in partnership with the U.S. government and the government of Iraq. Since 2004, USACE has completed 5,257 projects throughout Iraq valued at more than \$8.9 billion, and has 361 projects ongoing.

The Gulf Region District, headquartered in Baghdad, is a joint effort comprising Civilians, Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Contractors. GRD provides quality and sustainable engineering in support of civil/military construction in Iraq.

GRD and its Iraqi partners are building a strong foundation for Iraq's future.
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